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SUBJECT: NOMINATION FROM EMBASSY AMMAN FOR THE 2008 SECRETARY'S
AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE

REF: (A) STATE 126072 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (U) Embassy Amman is pleased to nominate Jordanian attorney Reem Abu Hassan for the Secretary of State's 2008 Award for International Women of Courage. Ms. Abu Hassan has used her legal expertise to champion equal rights and legal protection for Jordanian and Arab women as well as children, devoting special attention to honor crimes. Through membership in local, regional, and international organizations, she strives to educate communities on the need for equal protection under the law, arguing, "It's about time that through laws, regulations and services that we [women] take our natural roles since we are half of society."

¶2. (U) Ms. Hassan currently serves as Director of the Jordan branch of the Arab Center for the Development of the Rule of Law and Integrity, a regional non-profit corporation devoted to building Arab expertise in the area of judicial reform, civic participation, and freedom of expression. She also serves as a consultant to the Jordanian Judicial Institute and is the Head of the Directorate for Human Rights and Family Affairs in Jordan's Ministry of Justice. Furthermore, she is a founding member of the Arab Women's Legal Network and President of the Jordanian Society for Protecting Victims of Family Violence. She serves on the board of Partners for Democratic Change and headed the Working Group on Legal Issues of the Family Protection Project in Jordan from 2000-2003. She was also the Coordinator for the Family Empowerment Program at the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA).

¶3. (U) A distinguished author, Ms. Abu Hassan drafted the Jordan country report on "Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Citizenship and Justice," published by Freedom House in ¶2005. She also co-authored an article on honor crimes in Jordan, which appeared in the publication "Honour: Crimes, Paradigms and Violence against Women."

¶4. (U) Following the November 2005 terror attacks on three hotels in Amman, Jordan, Ms. Abu Hassan reached out to fellow Jordanians and led efforts to establish a hotline to provide counseling services to victims of the attacks and other traumatized citizens. In addition to responding to an immediate need, she had a broader goal of providing humanitarian relief and support services, and thus helped establish the Humanitarian Support Network, consisting of various governmental and nongovernmental organizations. She further developed and launched the "National Strategy to support Families and Victims in Crisis" and carries the mandate to oversee its implementation.

¶5. (U) Ms. Abu Hassan's campaign to advance recognition of and respect for legal rights for women is not limited to Jordan and the Middle East. She has worked closely with the U.S. Embassy Amman on judicial reform, and traveled with Jordanian judges to the U.S. on a number of exchange programs related to "Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism" (ADR) and "Case Management." Additionally, she is a founding member and current President of the Jordan Chapter of the International Women's Forum (IWF), a global organization of preeminent women of significant and diverse achievement which is

designed to advance women's leadership across careers, cultures, and continents by connecting women with each other. She concurrently serves as a Director of the IWF Leadership Foundation, the IWF's educational and charitable arm to prepare the next generation of women leaders. Through the IWF, Ms. Abu Hassan has taken her fight for women's rights globally and in May 2007, chaired an international conference in Amman of the IWF which attracted over 600 participants, the IWF's largest gathering to date. The conference, "Building Bridges, Breaking Walls," the first IWF meeting in the Middle East, brought together women business leaders, scholars, lawmakers, and nonprofit workers from 40 countries to discuss the role of Islam, democracy and modernization, the future of the Arab world and the role of Arab women, and the other difficult political, religious, and cultural differences currently challenging world leaders. According to conference attendees, Ms. Abu Hassan achieved her goal of promoting greater understanding through engagement and open dialogue.

¶6. (U) Through IWF, Ms. Abu Hassan also led several initiatives to support business and professional women working in a range of sectors, including banking, finance, IT, and telecom services. Her particular interest in supporting professional and career advancement of women working in the judicial and legal sector inspired her to advocate for the establishment of the Arab Women Legal Network (AWLN) in 2005. The mandate and vision established for AWLN includes a particular focus on the empowerment, encouragement, and professional development of female lawyers and judges.

¶7. (U) Despite her unfailing efforts, Ms. Abu Hassan has only been recognized once for her commitment to women's rights. In 2003, she shared in the award of the UN Prize in the Field of Human Rights which was bestowed on the Legal Committee of the Human Rights Advocacy Project of the Family Protection Unit.

¶8. (U) Ms. Abu Hassan received an LL.B. from the University of Jordan in 1985, and an LL.M from the University of London, London School of Economics in 1986, where she focused on international economic law; international arbitration; commercial law of the Middle East; and multinational enterprises and the Law. She also spent a year (1987-1988) as a visiting researcher on the law of evidence at Harvard Law School, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Ms. Abu Hassan is married to Thamer Obeidat, a Jordanian attorney, and is a mother of two children: Sara (17) and Ahmad (11).

¶9. (U) Biodata:

Full Name: Reem Mamdouh Abu Hassan
Job Title: President -International women's Forum /Jordan
Date of Birth: November 16, 1963
Place of Birth: Amman, Jordan
Nationality: Jordanian
Address: Fifth Circle - Zahran Street - Jabari Building - 2nd floor
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¶10. (U) Ms. Abu Hassan has been informed of the nomination.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman>

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